

# The 1974 Licence Letters

**Version 1.0.0 · 2026-10-23**

Editors of the Great House Farm Legal Wiki

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Page 24 of the Great House Farm Legal Wiki, carried over from the version last modified on 2026-10-21. The same page is published at [research.bucklerfamily.estate](https://research.bucklerfamily.estate), and this version is also a [PDF](#) in the wayback archive.

## 1 Release notes

### 1.1 This release (version 1.0.0)

- **2026-Oct-23** - Carried over to the docs library from Legal Wiki page 24 (last modified 2026-10-21 19:06:35 UTC). The page text, dates and references are as on the wiki. Links to wiki pages lead to the same page on [research.bucklerfamily.estate](https://research.bucklerfamily.estate); images are links to their files on the wiki.

### 1.2 Older versions

None yet.

## 2 Record

**Page ID:** 24 · **Title:** The 1974 Licence Letters · **Evidence status:** Not yet labelled — see the Editing Protocol · **Version:** 1.0.0 · [Editing Protocol](#)

Names: the family's copies of the 31 October 1974 letters are addressed to "**Mary Buckler**" (image [SOURCE PENDING](#)). The Court of Appeal describes them as addressed to "Mrs Buckler (described again as Mrs Williams)". The elder woman is **Mary (Nancy) Williams, formerly Buckler**. Her youngest daughter, **Mary Buckler (later Godfrey)**, had married by 1972; an older daughter, born 1940, was also registered Mary. Which Mary the letters name is an open question: see [Two Mary Bucklers? Name and identity timeline](#).

**On 31 October 1974 BP wrote to "Mrs Buckler... .. read more**

On 31 October 1974 [BP](#) wrote to "Mrs Buckler (Mrs Williams)" saying she could remain in the farmhouse at [Great House Farm](#) under licence [PENDING: [EV-0050](#)]. The Court of Appeal later held these letters decisive against the family. The letters came at the end of an autumn in which BP started two court routes against [Mary](#) and finished neither.

**What came before:** [1962 order](#) · [1965 tenancy](#)... .. [read more](#)

**What came before:** [1962 order](#) · [1965 tenancy offer refused](#) · [1967 Frederick's death](#) · [1969 WGR→BP](#) | **What happened next:** [1982–83 first registration](#) · [Mary's death, 1983](#) · [1984 writ](#) · [1987 Court of Appeal](#)

## 2.1 Evidence, in date order

### 15 April – 3 July 1974: The open day, a new action, and a defence of ownership

Newspaper article **Daily Telegraph, 16 April 1974: “‘Open day’ to save ancient Welsh house”, by Godfrey Francis**

Cutting held (RCAHMW-stamped copy, annotated “D. Telegraph 16 April 74”); full transcript at [GHF-E090-N03](#)

Catalogue: GHF-E024-03 (= GHF-E090-N03)

Location: family archive and web archive image set; RCAHMW NMR 6048944 records the same article

**DOCUMENTED FACT (press).** On 15 April 1974 Mary, then 60, opened the farmhouse to the public “to show what the nation is losing”, and hundreds came [[EV-0048](#)]. She said the former Glamorgan County Council had given the BP Petroleum Pension Trust planning permission for about 13 houses, “But I will refuse to move because not only is this my home it is part of the nation’s heritage.” She added: “The ownership of the house has been in dispute for 25 years but my family has lived here for more than 400 years and my solicitors tell me I have a valid claim to it.” About 1,000 people had signed a petition, and the report says the family had acquired Ty Mawr in about 1667.

Court papers **County court possession action against Mary (Nancy) Williams, formerly Buckler, 1974**

Placeholder: to be obtained

Catalogue: GHF-E024-01

Location: Court record repository not yet confirmed; archive location is to be established

**Evidence description:** BP brought a fresh county court action for possession and mesne profits against Mary and her children. On 3 July 1974 she pleaded that she owned the house parcel, and relied on the Limitation Act 1939 [[PENDING: EV-0049](#)]. The hearing was part-heard and adjourned [[PENDING: EV-0049](#)]. It was never listed again.

Witness statement **Mary (Nancy) Williams, statement, c. 1974**

[Read the transcription →](#)

Catalogue: GHF-E024-02

Location: Family archive / privately held material

**Evidence description:** her statement for the action. The co-defendants were her daughter Janet, Janet’s husband and her son William, who “make no claim to the property”. She claims the farmhouse and about 10 acres through the [1877 agreement](#) and says she had “never ... paid rent to or acknowledged the title of anyone as landlord” ([statement](#)).

Parcel A The open day, the action, the plea and the statement all concern the farmhouse and the land around it ([Parcel A](#)).

**Research note.** Her plea was a defence of title. Because the hearing was never relisted, no court decided who owned the house parcel. The April 1974 newspaper report, published before the plea, records the same claim of ownership in public; it is not a judgment.

**Change control, 3 October 2026:** placeholder GHF-E024-03 (“Newspaper report on Mary (Nancy) Williams’s ownership claim, 1974”) has been identified as the Daily Telegraph report of 16 April 1974 and transcribed. Elsewhere on this wiki the same cutting had been dated “19 November 1977”; see [the dating note](#).

### 19 September – 31 October 1974: The old order and the withdrawn warrant

Court papers **County court application for leave to enforce the 1962 order, September–October 1974**

Placeholder: to be obtained

Catalogue: GHF-E024-04 (also GHF-E023-07)

Location: Not yet established from the present record

**Evidence description:** at the same time BP applied for leave to enforce the [possession order of 11 December 1962](#). On 19 September 1974 the county court judge gave leave, but no warrant was to issue before 31 October. Mary’s solicitors appealed because she had not been given notice. On 31 October the warrant was withdrawn.

Parcel A The 1962 order covered the farmhouse and garden.

**Research note.** The 1962 order was not set aside, and the 1974 action was not dismissed. Both were left undecided.

### 31 October 1974: The letters

Letter **BP to “Mrs Buckler (Mrs Williams)”, 31 October 1974**

Placeholder: to be obtained (recited in the 1987 judgment)

Catalogue: GHF-E024-05

Location: Not yet established from the present record

**Evidence description:** on the day the warrant was withdrawn, BP’s letters offered Mary a licence to stay in the farmhouse. The press later reported BP’s version of these letters: “In 1974 BP Properties agreed to allow Mrs Buckler to remain in the farmhouse rent free” (South Wales Echo, 29 April 1988; [GHF-E090-N15](#)). In 1988 a BP spokesman said she was allowed to live there rent-free “because of her ill health” ([GHF-E090-N07](#)).

Parcel AA licence of the farmhouse: the last attempt to make her occupation of the house parcel look permissive.

**Research note.** She never accepted the licence and continued to assert ownership in writing and in the press.

**Analysis: why 1974 matters**

**Research note.** If BP had a clean title to the house parcel, 1974 was the moment to prove it: by asking the court for a declaration of title, or by taking judgment on Mary’s plea. BP did neither. It adjourned the title fight, abandoned the warrant and sent a licence instead. The reasons the family gives for avoiding a trial of title are the open questions about the 1962 order (single-unit framing, jurisdiction, Mary as owner-claimant rather than a tenant holding over: [questions about the 1962 order](#)) and the running of time after Mary refused the 1965 offer.

**Research note.** The letters are treated as the last identified step in a 1949–1974 sequence that repeatedly sought to characterise Mary’s occupation of Parcel A as permissive. That sequence is distinct from proof of the underlying freehold title, and moral fairness is kept distinct from legal effect: what the 1974 proceedings actually decided, and what evidence of Parcel A title was before the court, remain the open questions.

**What happened next: the High Court (July... .. read more**

**What happened next:** the High Court (July 1986) and the [Court of Appeal \(31 July 1987\)](#) held that the letters made her possession permissive from 1974, whether or not she accepted them, so 12 years of adverse possession never ran [[EV-0080](#); PENDING: [EV-0074](#)]. The judgment as presently identified did not finally adjudicate the historic Parcel A title in the adjourned 1974 action. Her title documents were not produced because, as Mary (Nancy) Williams’s c.1974 witness statement ([Mary \(Nancy\) Williams testimony](#)) records, they had been [taken from the farmhouse in 1950–52](#).

**Evidence: Court of Appeal judgment, 1987... .. read more**

**Evidence:** [Court of Appeal judgment, 1987](#) (catalogued here as GHF-E024-06)

**Method and evidence key: Main Page · title... .. read more**

Method and evidence key: [Main Page · title test](#) · [Master timeline](#) · [Press Archive](#) — [Newspaper Transcripts](#)

**Name/location reference: Great House Farm ... .. read more**

**Name/location reference:** [Great House Farm](#) — [Name & Location Variations](#) (historical spellings and Llandough-juxta-Penarth location forms).

2.2 Page version & change log

Current version: 1.0.0

| Version | Date (UTC)        | Editor (human or agent name) | Change                                 | Source / evidence             |
|---------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.0.0   | 2026-10-18T15:15Z | Sion’s Tab agent             | Footer standardised; no content change | Editing Protocol, 18 Oct 2026 |

Agents and editors: follow the [Editing Protocol](#).